

HUNGARY CUSTOMS

Greetings:

Adults greet each other with a firm handshake. A man usually waits for a woman to extend her hand first. Many Hungarians also *puszi*, or kiss each other lightly on each cheek.

Polite verbal greetings include *Jó napot kívánok* (Good day), *Jó reggelt kívánok* (Good morning), and *ó estét kívánok* (Good evening). *Kívánok* is often left off in more casual circumstances or is replaced by a person's name.

Children may greet older adults with *Kezét csókolom* (I kiss your hand). Adults might also use this with family or close friends to show special respect.

Popular informal greetings include *Haló*, *Szervusz*, or *Szia*, which all mean “Hello.” The latter two terms come from the Latin *servus*, which once meant “I am here to serve you.” One might follow a greeting with *Hogy vagy?* (How are you?) or another question.

When parting, Hungarians say *Viszontlátásra* (See you again) or simply *Haló*, *Viszlát*, or *Szia*.

Gestures:

Good friends, especially among the younger generation, will put their arms around each other's shoulders when they walk in public.

Talking with one's hands in one's pockets is considered impolite. While blowing one's nose in public is acceptable, repeated sniffing is considered rude.

Shaking one's fist at someone, giving a thumbs-down, or holding a fist with the thumb between the index and middle fingers are all seen as rude or vulgar gestures.

To wish a person happy birthday, some Hungarians will pull the person's earlobe slightly while saying “Happy Birthday.”

Holidays:

Public holidays include New Year's Day, War of Freedom Day (15 March, a day marking the 1848 rebellion and war), Easter (Sunday and Monday), Labor Day (1 May), Pentecost, St. Stephen's Day (20 Aug.), National Holiday (23 October, in honor of the 1956 uprising), and Christmas (25–26 Dec.).

At Easter, it is customary in some places for boys to “sprinkle” girls with water or cologne as a sign that the girl is a flower that should not wilt. Also popular at this time are elaborately painted Easter eggs. St. Stephen's Day celebrates the harvest and honors the first king of Hungary.